

- 11 -

REMARKS

Applicant has amended claims 1 and 23-42 and added new claims 43-55 as shown above and explained further herein below. In view of these amendments and the following remarks, Applicant hereby requests examination and consideration of the application, and allowance of claims 1-55.

Claims 1 and 23-42 have been amended as mentioned and shown above to clarify the language recited in those claims. These amendments do not change the scope of the claims and make explicit what was implicit in the prior language to clarify the claims. Further, no new matter has been entered by way of the amendments to the claims, as support for these amendments is found in the above-identified application as originally filed at claims 1-42; FIGS. 1 and 3-10; and at page 4, lines 18-27 and page 9, line 26 through page 15, line 26. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the Office consider and enter the amendments to the claims.

The Office has rejected claims 1-3, 7-12, 14-26, 30-35 and 37-42 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,252,597 to Lokuge ("Lokuge") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,085,202 to Rao et al. ("Rao"), and claims 4-6, 13, 27-29 and 36 under § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lokuge in view of Rao and U.S. Patent No. 5,832,502 to Durham et al. The Office asserts that Lokuge discloses a threaded information visualization system that provides a visualization of threaded information that includes plural threaded information entries, a graphical representation of the threaded information rendered on a display screen (col. 2, line 6 through col. 3, line 14), comprising an indented threading arrangement (col. 6, lines 8-15; col. 11, lines 5-43; FIGS. 15 and 16). The Office concedes that Lokuge does not disclose generally one-dimensional entry lines that each represent one of the threaded information entries, but asserts that Rao teaches this limitation (col. 16, lines 33-37; col. 17, lines 46-54; FIGS. 14 and 15). The Office then asserts that it would have been obvious to combine Lokuge and Rao to render the above-identified claims obvious. Applicant hereby respectfully traverses the outstanding rejections for the following reasons.

M.P.E.P. § 2143.01 states that there is no motivation or suggestion to modify an invention disclosed in a reference where the proposed modifications would render that invention unsatisfactory for its intended purpose. The invention disclosed in Lokuge, which

- 12 -

will be described in further detail herein below, cannot be modified to use anything other than textual or iconic representations that provide meaningful descriptions of underlying content without rendering the invention unsatisfactory for its intended purpose. The intended purpose of the Lokuge invention is to clearly display the contents of file categories that are of interest to a user while maintaining a display of the overall file structure, as discussed in Lokuge at col. 3, lines 27-30. In the background section at col. 2, lines 3-4, for example, Lokuge states that a “graphical user interface does not eliminate the need for a text-based structure.” To clearly display the contents of file categories, Lokuge uses textual or iconic representations that are legible and/or recognizable to a user so that their underlying content can be identified and conveyed to the user. Moreover, Lokuge does not consider or discuss representing the underlying content associated with file categories with non-textual or non-iconic representations.

Referring to Lokuge at FIG. 7 and col. 8, lines 17-35, for example, a computer display 40 is illustrated and described as having a companies category 60 that has been selected for display of its contents 62 that are of interest to a user. The contents 62 include pictorial icons 66 and text descriptors (e.g., aol, cisco, Fitch, Kenyan Systems). Unselected categories 56 (e.g., email, desktop, trash) may be resized to make room in the display 40 for the contents 62, as set forth in col. 8, lines 19-27. The pictorial icons 66 and text descriptors forming the contents 62 of the selected category 60 may also be resized when necessary to make room, as discussed at col. 8, lines 28-35. As shown in FIG. 7, however, the textual and iconic representations used to form the unselected categories 56, pictorial icons 66 and text descriptors remain legible and/or recognizable even if they are resized.

As mentioned above, the Office asserts that Lokuge discloses all of the limitations recited in claims 1 and 23 except generally one-dimensional entry lines that each represent one of the threaded information entries. The Office then asserts that Rao teaches generally one-dimensional entry lines that each represent one of the threaded information entries (col. 16, lines 33-37; col. 17, lines 46-54; FIGS. 14 and 15). The Office concludes that it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified Lokuge using the teachings from Rao to provide one-dimensional rows in a hierarchical arrangement on a graphical display to effectively view selected regions of interest in a graphical data representation environment. Basically, Rao,

- 13 -

which will be discussed in further detail herein below, discloses using graphical display objects to represent non-textual data associated with a cell in a table. However, the textual and iconic representations used to form the unselected categories 56, pictorial icons 66 and text descriptors in Lokuge cannot be replaced with simple graphical representations because they must convey explicit information about their underlying content, such as a particular title (e.g., companies), for the invention to be satisfactory for its intended purpose. If simple graphical representations were used, then the Lokuge invention could not clearly display the file categories of interest to a user. Accordingly, there is no suggestion or motivation to modify Lokuge.

There must be some suggestion or motivation to modify a reference to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness, as discussed in M.P.E.P. § 2143. The suggestion or motivation must be found either in the reference or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art. As set forth above, there is no suggestion or motivation for modifying Lokuge found in either Lokuge or Rao, nor has the Office identified such a suggestion or motivation in either of the references. Further, no evidence has been made of record in the above-identified application which shows that a suggestion or motivation for modifying Lokuge was found in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention. As such, the burden now falls upon the Office to demonstrate that the suggestion or motivation for modifying Lokuge was found in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests evidence of such in a subsequent Office action.

Even if Lokuge could be modified to represent the unselected categories 56, pictorial icons 66 and text descriptors using simple graphical display objects without rendering the Lokuge invention unsatisfactory for its intended purpose, Rao does not teach representing threaded content or messages using graphical display objects. The Office's attention is now directed to Rao at FIG. 1 and col. 14, lines 11-26 and lines 47-53, which disclose using graphical display objects (e.g., black-filled bar 30, small rectangular black-filled object 32, color-filled bar 36, color-filled square 40, and black or white-filled square 42) for representing non-textual data associated with cells in a table 10. For example, the length of the black-filled bars 30 in column 1 of the table 10 may represent numeric data, such as a quantity value, as discussed at col. 15, lines 1-22 in connection with Table 2.

- 14 -

However, the values represented by the graphical display objects employed by Rao are simple data values (e.g., numeric, Boolean, etc.), as discussed at col. 15, lines 37-67 in connection with Table 3. Accordingly, the combined teachings of Lokuge and Rao would still fail to disclose all of the limitations recited in claims 1 and 23. In view of the foregoing remarks, the Office is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejections of claims 1 and 23. Since claims 2-22 depend from and contain the limitations of claim 1 and claims 24-42 depend from and contain the limitations of claim 23, they are patentable in the same manner as claims 1 and 23, respectively.


Applicant submits that new claims 43-55 are patentable over the cited references and are allowable.

In view of all the foregoing, it is submitted that this case is in condition for allowance and such allowance is earnestly solicited. In the event that there are any outstanding matters remaining in the above-identified application, the Office is invited to contact the undersigned to discuss this application.

Respectfully submitted,

MICROSOFT CORPORATION

Date: July 27, 2004

By 
John Campa
Registration No. 49,014
Direct Phone No. (425) 706-0731